“Best among people are those who benefit mankind,” a wise man once said as if referring to the work done by the Road Accident Fund (RAF) on a daily basis.

On Nelson Mandela International Day, 18 July, a day celebrated globally to honour the legacy of the former South African President and make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate, scores of RAF employees espoused the Fund’s and Madiba’s value of Ubuntu and made a difference to the lives of many.

Teams from different RAF Regions and Customer Centres made contributions by donating food, clothes, blankets, cleaned homes for the needy, painted, fixed potholes, played with children and most importantly, donated their time and brought a smile to many South Africans.

Madiba’s birthday, 18 July, has been recognised by the United Nations (UN) as a day on which the world should donate 67 minutes of their time and assist those in need in honour of Madiba’s 67 years’ contribution to freedom and equality.

Urging the RAF Team to participate in the event, RAF CEO, Dr Eugene Watson said: “Today (18 July) is a special day.

“Today, we honour our former president and international icon Nelson Mandela. We embrace Madiba’s values and honour his legacy through humanitarian acts and initiatives that acknowledge his never-ending quest to change the world for the better.

“A global movement for positive change begins with small actions. As each person acts, they fuel momentum toward positive change, raising awareness and expanding the reach of Mr Mandela’s values – fighting injustice, helping people in need and practising reconciliation.

“Recognising what a great man Madiba was, we should all, in some way, make a contribution today. But to honour his great legacy, we should make everyday a Madiba Day. Considering where we work, touching the lives of road crash victims is a great start,” he concluded.

The call was heeded and a Mini ‘RAF on the Road’ was held in Port Shepstone in KwaZulu-Natal, one of many events organised by RAF employees, who touched the lives of many people affected by road crashes and saw claims worth more than R2.4 million settled on the day.

The RAF also touched lives of people in the following manner:

• The RAF, led by Chief Strategy Officer, Ms Mantiti Kola, in conjunction with the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO), the Hibiscus Coast Municipality, politicians and other community leaders, supported the launch of the SDI Pothole Repair Project and conducted a symbolic fixing of potholes in the area. The team also held a Mini ‘RAF on the Road’ at St Martins Deporres Comprehensive School and settled claims worth R2.4 million.

• Our Durban Regional Team visited Nobamba High School where they painted four classrooms, cleaned the...
yard and also donated clothes to needy learners, as well as more donations to the Sthandiwe Disabled Care Centre which houses 50 adults and children.

• In Bloemfontein, the RAF joined Free State Premier Ace Magashule in a cleaning operation at Pelonomi Hospital grounds.
• Our Mafikeng Customer Service Centre joined the North West Office of the Premier and Department of Public Works and Roads and painted Kebohang High School and cleaned the Lonely Park Cemetery.
• Our Kimberley Customer Service Centre participated in an SAPS Mandela Day Awareness Campaign which entailed a 3.5 km clean-up walk from the Kimberley Police Station to the Sol Plaatjie Park.
• The RAF witnessed the official opening of Kalafong Provincial Tertiary Hospital Accident and Emergency Unit, where we contributed R1million towards the upgrade and revamping of the venue which treats scores of victims of road accidents annually.
• Members from our Menlyn Regional office visited the Mali Martin Shelter for Abused Women in Bronkhorstspruit and painted the shelter. The team also visited Jubilee Hospital and donated cleaning detergents and cleaned the area.
• The RAF was also present at the Annual Atteridgeville Old Age Marathon and provided refreshments to participants. The Johannesburg Region collected blankets and clothes and donated these to Sithandiwe Disabled Care Centre.
• The East London Regional team donated disposable nappies and toiletries for children.
• Some members of the Cape Town team also made tea and coffee for patients at Stellenbosch Hospital.
• The Johannesburg Women’s Forum visited Usindiso Ministries, which provides shelter for abused and/or homeless women and children in Johannesburg CBD, held a prayer session and donated electrical appliances including heaters, fans and electrical kettles, as well as food, clothes and toiletries. The team has pledged to provide blankets, as well as a TV set and a DVD player for the home.
• The Johannesburg RAFzin Men’s Forum has pledged to start a vegetable garden for the home.

Neli Shuping, RAF Acting Chief Marketing Officer, said she was pleased with the overall contributions made by RAF employees. “The selfishness shown by a number of our colleagues in making Mandela Day special to the less fortunate is an indication of the kindness that flows within this organisation and how we have embraced our value of Ubuntu. We are in the business of making a difference in the lives of people and what we did on the day is an extension of what we are tasked with doing every day,’ she said, thanking all those who participated.

Her gratitude was shared by Watson who said “#TeamRAFzin engaged excellently with Deputy Ministers, Premiers, MEC’s, Chairpersons of Portfolio Committees and a host of VIP’s. Well done.”

Thabo Mkhize